IT Professional Technical Services
Master Contract Program
T#:902TSStatement of Work (SOW)
For Technology Services
Issued By
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
Unemployment Insurance Division
Correspondence Rewrite Project

Service Category: Web Design & Development

Addendum

Vendor Questions

After reviewing the SOW issued - Will the Department of Employment and Economic Development consider using an already purchased/owned tool in the State of Minnesota, Liquid Office, to handle this development (purchased and used by the Department of Human Services in the State of Minnesota on several current web based forms for Health data collection issues, including DB101 an new Minnesota initiative)? Much of what is required easy forms build, possible quick forms language changes, escalation of processes, reporting, data collection, timely notifications via routing, database connectivity etc… this functionality is pre-built into this already owned tool and can be accomplished via a business analyst vs. a customized development project that requires upgrades, coding fixes, web changes etc…

> The intent of this initiative is to rewrite correspondence based on user input. The rewritten correspondence will reside in the UI system. Software tools alone will not accomplish project objectives. Vendors are welcome to use whatever tools they have at their disposal to facilitate the rewrite. Vendors are encouraged to recommend tools that would assist DEED in future development efforts.

With respect to the revised versions of notices and questionnaires, will UI Division attorneys sign off on each review? Will the UI Division remain responsible for the technical accuracy and legality of the language, as opposed to the vendor accepting this responsibility?

> DEED subject matter experts and legal counsel will review edited materials and inform the vendor of needed changes. DEED will assume responsibility for the technical accuracy and legality of the language. If needed this assurance will be incorporated into the contract with the selected vendor.

Page 1 says "Questionnaires are compiled from electronic files then presented to the customer online and by mail." Are the questionnaires compiled from a content management system (CMS) in which each question is a separate content object? If so,

will the vendor revise the text within the content management system or work with separate paper copies?

Text used is maintained in the DEED UI system. The vendor will submit their edits and drafts in Microsoft Word or Excel. Implementing changes in the DEED UI system will be the responsibility of DEED staff.

Page 6 refers to the fact that some information is gathered unnecessarily while other necessary information is not gathered. Would it be possible for the UI Division to remedy this situation before the vendor conducts usability testing?

Initial input into what is unnecessary or what is missing can be collected through requirements gathering activities by the vendor prior to soliciting user input. However it is anticipated that this will also be informed through user centered methodologies.

Page 6 of the RFP refers to the four questionnaires to be included in the initial evaluation. The two employer pieces make reference to "interviews, focus groups, or surveys with employers or employer agents," and the Raising an Issue piece also refers to testing with 20 employers. At this point, is your preference to conduct usability testing with employers/agents OR to use another user research method, OR to combine research methods? Is there a reason testing is referenced with Raising an Issue and not with the Quits, Discharges, and Separation Pay piece? We are happy to provide our recommended approach, but we want first to make sure we understand your preferences.

Primary objective is for the rewrite to user centered. It is expected that a variety of user centered methodologies will be employed. The ideal is user testing with real users conducting real business. However, this may not always be possible and other methods may be required or even preferred. Vendors should submit their recommendations in their proposals with the understanding that specific strategies for collecting user input will be determined once the project has been initiated.

Is the DEED UI project team open to a somewhat modified approach to the initial evaluation? For example, we could first do a type of heuristic review of the questionnaires and 20 selected notices and, with collaboration from the DEED UI team, make initial revisions in draft form to capture any "low-hanging fruit" issues. Then, when user feedback on the current documents is collected in the test sessions, time would also be included to show the testers the initial revised drafts and gather their feedback on the changes made. This feedback would provide additional information for us as we proceed with the revisions.

Yes, DEED UI is open to alternative approaches. The one requirement is that the rewrite employ user centered methodologies including user testing where appropriate.

Given the scope of the project and the number of items ultimately to be evaluated and revised, is DEED UI open to an estimate for the first phase only (i.e., to the end of the initial evaluation)? As noted in the RFP, what is learned during the initial evaluation will inform the remaining work, and it is possible that some assumptions used to estimate the second phase before completing the initial evaluation may prove to be invalid. If DEED UI is not open to this approach, would you be open to a potential revision of the estimate for the second phase once the initial evaluation is complete? We have noted (on page 5 for example) that "if there is a material increase in scope, contract modifications will be negotiated."

> Proposals should address the requirements of the SOW. If there is ambiguity in scope adjustments may be made during contract negotiation. If significant scope changes are required after project initiation contact modifications will be negotiated.

Given the large number of users of the DEED UI program, and the large number of forms, questionnaires, notices, etc, the potential for error and unnecessary actions (such as appeals) is significant, as the RFP notes. In light of inherent complexities and the low skill level of a segment of the system's users, the probability of some continued mistakes is high, no matter how good the revisions. Can DEED UI provide the current error rate and indicate what reduction in that error rate it is aiming for with this project? Similarly, is there a current cost-of-errors calculation available and a reduction in this cost that you are aiming for?

> It is understood that there is a segment of DEED UI customers who will always struggle with communications. Data is available for analysis on current error rates. However that analysis has not been conducted at this time. Additionally specific goals have not been established for error reduction. Analyzing current error rates and establishing goals is a reasonable step in establishing project scope and deliverables. It is recommended that vendors include recommendations in their proposals. It would be preferred for DEED to provide the raw data to the vendor for analysis then the vendor would facilitate establishing error reduction goals with DEED UI staff and leadership.

Page 8 indicates that the vendor will produce redesigned and rewritten questionnaires and notices. Please specify the form of these--Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, content objects for the UI Employer and Applicant Self Service System, or something else? For the questionnaires, would you like a single instance of each question that is used on multiple questionnaires, or would you like the complete set of 480 variations of the questionnaires?

> The vendor will produce correspondence in Word or Excel. Where language is common to various notices or questionnaires editing only needs to occur once. Where language is unique it needs to be edited. The rewrite includes all 480 variations of the questionnaires.